



The Center on
Conscience & War

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Annual

CCW Year in Review

With contributions from CCW staff Liz Rekowski, Bill Galvin, and Maria Santelli; Board Chair, Dallas Wisehaupt; and American University intern, Derek Mraz.

The year was off to a rousing start, with a rally to close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. Daniel Lakemacher, a former CCW staff member and Navy conscientious objector who was stationed at Guantanamo Bay before being honorably discharged as a CO, delivered an impassioned speech describing how the injustice he witnessed at Guantanamo compelled him to seek discharge as a CO. You can see Daniel's speech on our website.

Settling in to 2012, we took care of some housekeeping. We organized and reduced our office space, allowing more of your support dollars to go toward our important work and fewer to be needed for administrative overhead. In doing so, we also were able to release 17 boxes of NSBRO/NISBCO/CCW papers to our archive at Swarthmore College, making this treasure of history accessible to researchers around the world!

Our Board added many talented members in 2012. We merged the board of FEAT (Fund for Education and Training, managed by CCW) with CCW's board, adding Dan Cole (NSBRO/NISBCO/CCW historian) and Janine Schwab (long-time organizer with American Friends Service Committee's Youth and Militarism Program). New friends also joined our board: Adam Bray of the Methodist Church's Just Peace; George Clifford, retired Navy Chaplain; Patrick Sheehan-Gaumer, War Resisters League; and Nate Hosler, Church of the Brethren and National Council of Churches. Dr. Jim Lieberman, a Korean War era CO whose second term on the board ended this year, has been a tremendous contributor. We thank him deeply. We will miss his spirit, expertise, and dedication.

In the spring and summer, friends provided us the opportunity to share with their communities the value of conscientious objection today, in a post-draft society. In April, Jim Feldman and Sharon Sigal opened their home in the Philadelphia area, and in July, Suzanne Day's family farm on the beautiful Delaware River was the site of an annual Quaker Peace Picnic – this year, in our honor. Thank you!

CCW provided training to our colleagues around the country this year, with Bill and Maria presenting workshops at the an-



GI Rights Hotline Training in NYC, Summer 2012



Peace Picnic, Summer 2012



GI Rights Hotline Annual Conference

nual conference of the GI Rights Hotline Network in June. In early August, Bill led a GI Rights Training for the New York City node of the GI Rights Hotline. Counselors-in-training learned about injustices experienced by members of the military (like the inability to access proper medical care), as well as conscientious objection and the rights of military personnel to resist or refuse unjust or illegal orders.

Each fall, we welcome an American University intern to our staff for the semester. Derek Mraz, a Peace and Conflict Studies major, is working on two exciting projects. The first is a state-by-state analysis of specific legislation related to Selective Service Registration. Conscientious objectors to draft registration may face local, in addition to federal, penalties. This information not only varies by state, but also is often difficult to track down or is presented in a confusing manner. Derek's work will help CCW provide young men across the country with the information they need to decide how they may best follow their conscience.

Derek's second project is a student-to-student outreach campaign to Peace and Justice Studies students around the country. Our objective is to raise awareness of the tremendous power of the CO application process in its capacity to compel conversations about the morality of war to take place at the *highest levels of the US military!*

As we go to press, Maria is preparing for a trip to Ft. Worth, TX for the opening of the Soul Repair Center at Brite Divinity School. The Soul Repair Center will work on preventing and assisting in healing the wound of war known as moral injury. Moral injury describes the wounds to one's soul caused by engaging in behavior that is in violation of his or her conscience.

Of course, the heart of our work, support of conscientious objectors to war, continues. And we are very good at what we do: when COs work with us, their chances of a successful outcome nearly double when compared to those COs who go it alone! It is a gift to walk with them on their path, and it is a joy to see them honorably discharged and given the freedom to fully follow their conscience!

Thank you to all for your support in 2012. You make our work possible. We hope you will continue to stand with us, and with all who are conscientiously opposed to war, in 2013 and in the years to come!



Edison Gebhard, Navy CO discharged 2012. Pictured with his daughter.

Also Inside:

CO Deported by Canada page 2
Immigration and CO page 2

To All COs: A Letter from Turkey page 3
Brethren Volunteer Service page 3

nota bene page 4



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Founded in 1940, the Center on Conscience & War works to extend and defend the rights of conscientious objectors to war. In pursuit of this mission, the Center provides these services free of charge:

- Counseling military conscientious objectors.
- Legal support for military personnel.
- Monitoring Congress to extend and defend the rights of conscientious objectors.
- Accurate information to the public on Selective Service registration.
- Support to COs who refuse to register for the draft through F.E.A.T student loans.
- Counseling military personnel on the GI Rights Hotline with accuracy and honesty.
- Military counter-recruitment information.
- Workshops, training, and speakers on any of the above topics.

CO Deported by Canada Was Failed by U.S. First.....*Liz Rekowski*

Kimberly Rivera. Does that name sound familiar? To many people in the U.S. it may not. Kimberly Rivera is a war resister who fled to Canada in 2007 when she was given orders to redeploy to Iraq. She has been in the news lately because she was ordered to leave Canada and return to the U.S. by September 20, 2012 – an order with which she complied and which resulted in her prompt arrest at the U.S. border.

Most of the news stories about Kimberly focus on the failure of the Canadian government to grant her sanctuary. But Kimberly would never have felt the need to flee to Canada if systems here in the United States had not already failed her.

There are systems in place for conscientious objectors to seek discharge from the military, but the process is long, confusing, and far too unknown. Nearly all the COs who contact the Center for help have never heard of applying for discharge as a conscientious objector; many don't believe they would qualify for such a discharge because they joined the military voluntarily; and many are surprised to learn that a CO discharge could be an honorable one. The biggest problem people in Kimberly's position face is a lack of knowledge about their options. It is our challenge to increase knowledge about conscientious objection in society in general – and in military culture specifically – so that all those who are led by their conscience to resist war know they have a way to do so. Even if you know about applying for a conscientious objection discharge, you are looking at a long and daunting process. The average time between putting in a CO application and receiving a discharge is **seven months to a year**. For many, these months mean harassment from their commands and peers, not to mention being forced to remain part of an institution whose actions are in direct violation of their conscience. For people in Kimberly's specific situation, who are under deployment orders, putting in a CO application may not keep them from deploying and participating in war. According to the Department of Defense Instruction concerning conscientious objection, DoDI 1300.06, "an applicant shall be required to comply with active duty or transfer orders in effect at the time of his or her application or subsequently issued and received." Even if Kimberly had known about CO and applied, she may still have been sent to Iraq to participate in acts of war, despite having professed her change of conscience and submitting an application for discharge.

The current system for military COs is broken. CCW has drafted legislation, the Military CO Act (MCOA), to help fix it. Unfortunately, the political climate in recent years has been hostile toward our efforts. With your help, we will continue to work to build the grassroots momentum we need to fix this failed system, for Kimberly and all the COs who say no to war. Learn more about MCOA at our website. Learn more about Kimberly at couragegetoressist.org.

Immigration and CO: The Alternative Oath.....*Titus Peachey*

When Arthur Jost applied for U.S. citizenship in 1950, he had no idea that this was the beginning of a five-year struggle that would end with a ruling in his favor by the U.S. Supreme Court. The "problem" was that Arthur, a Canadian from a Mennonite Brethren family, was a conscientious objector to war.

Arthur had moved to the United States with his family as a child. When WWII broke out, Arthur was drafted. Due to his commitment to peace, Arthur applied for conscientious objector status and performed alternative service by working for four years as an attendant in a hospital. Given his alternative servicework and positive contribution to his community, Arthur decided to apply for U.S. citizenship.

Historically, U.S. naturalization policies interpreted the citizenship oath as a requirement to bear arms on behalf of the nation. As his case wound its way through the courts, judgments were greatly influenced by the McCarthy era's hostility toward pacifism. Finally, on February 1, 1954, the Supreme Court ordered a lower court to grant citizenship to Arthur. This decision was significant in several ways:

1. It clarified that conscientious objectors to war can be granted U.S. citizenship.
2. It established the right of individual conscientious objectors to be granted citizenship whether or not they belong to a group that supports their beliefs.

Today, the citizenship oath, or "oath of renunciation and allegiance," includes three statements related to military service, as follows:

- that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law;
- that I will perform noncombatant service in the armed forces of the United States when required by law;
- that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by law.

Only the third, performing work of national importance under civilian direction, is required of conscientious objectors. This issue is sometimes not well understood by immigration officials or applicants. The process of taking a modified oath and promising only to perform work of national importance under civilian direction begins with the written application for citizenship, where applicants are required to check the one relevant box.

Conscientious objectors who are applying for citizenship would need to write a statement that outlines the central beliefs or convictions that give rise to their claim. In addition, they are encouraged to submit letters of reference from people who can vouch for the sincerity of their claim, as well as statements from religious bodies or other groups that provide a basis for their beliefs.

In the event of a draft, conscientious objectors who have become citizens and are drafted would still need to go through the CO classification process with Selective Service. Mennonite Central Committee has produced an "Immigration and Conscientious Objection *Continued, p. 3*

For Conscience' Sake

Continued from p. 2

Packet" which contains detailed information, along with sample letters of reference and sample statements, from immigrants who have gone through the citizenship process as conscientious objectors. This is a bilingual (English/Spanish) packet and can be ordered at: <https://resources.mcc.org/content/immigration-and-conscientious-objection-packet>.

For some citizenship applicants, this process is smooth. For others, it may involve more work to satisfy the demands of a particular immigration officer. But all immigrant conscientious objectors should be assured that their beliefs are protected by law and cannot be the basis for a denial of U.S. citizenship.

To All COs

A letter from CO Kasim Dogan, Turkey

Dear Reader,

I am a conscientious objector. This is my homage to Turkey's first conscientious objector, Tayfun Gönül, who passed away recently. I also dedicated my song "Refuse to Kill" to him.

You can call me November since that's what my name means in Turkish. I majored in American Literature and I am a published poet/translator and an asylum seeker, a stateless nobody. I believe in one thing and one thing only: we are first human. Religion, ethnicity, skin color, sex, sexual orientation, and all our differences don't, shouldn't, and can't change that. This should be the foundation of how we deal with conflicts.

My very first experience with the idea of being a soldier goes back to my early childhood. When I was six years old my great-grandfather decided to give me a military haircut. I tried to run away but he caught me. He said, "Every Turk is born a soldier, son." He also added that I must get used to it and be a man, and I'd look manly only if I looked like a soldier. Two years later my mom's second cousin died serving the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) during an attack by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), and I remember how horrible I felt seeing his picture on his coffin wrapped in a Turkish flag. Nobody, including his parents, was allowed to take a final look at him because there was no face to recognize, and there were only body parts in the coffin, rather than an intact corpse. So the formula for life I got from these two experiences is pretty much as follows: man = soldier = die a horrible death, most likely before you are 25.

You will be just a statistic, and the government you've served will still have a lot more lower class young men to slaughter after you give your life to this martyrdom. Their own sons will study and live abroad. In the meantime, the people will continue to be kept numb with news and propaganda against "the other," in a world where ethnic and religious diversity is daily turned into racism and modern crusade.

It was my second year at university when I started to see the world as it is and learned about conscientious objection and Tayfun Gönül. Until then I was quite sure that nobody in my country could even think about refusing military service. This was my awakening. I realized that I couldn't bear arms and be in a position where I will have to kill or die according to orders that come from a government to whom we mean nothing.

Around the same time that my great-grandfather gave me the haircut, Tayfun had taken a stand when nobody else could. He confronted the Republic of Turkey alone. He embraced the consequences. He showed that a citizen against the government and all odds can bring a change. He inspired a lot of people around him, as well as those he had never met. I am one, and though there were decades between us, it doesn't matter. For years I talked to people around me. Everybody without exception told me that there is no way one could reject military service. I kept tell-

ing them that I would prefer dignity with pain over the unbearable guilt of being another pretentious brick in the wall.

I decided to go public a year ago. I sent my CO declaration to the Human Rights Organization in Istanbul where it was read during a press conference and published on several websites. I worked as a voluntary youth leader in Sweden between September, 2011 and July, 2012, trying to use Forum Theater (Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal) and music. Afterwards I sought asylum, and currently I am trying to study and prepare myself psychologically for possible rejection, deportation, or prison time – which carries with it the threat of harassment and torture both from the guards and inmates – while I am waiting for my asylum interview. I live on bread and cheese and was homeless for awhile, but right now I am staying with a friend who believes in me.

There is a lot more I'd like to say, but I have limited space. If you would like to know more about CO in Turkey, you can visit several organizations' websites such as War Resisters International, Amnesty International, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, and Bianet. *"Never think that war, no matter how necessary, nor how justified, is not a crime."* E. Hemingway.

Peace, November (Kasim)

Brethren Volunteer Service

Liz Rekowski, BVS, 2011-2012

I am very sad to leave CCW, but I leave this year with a newfound appreciation for my upbringing. I came to the belief system of nonviolence through my childhood. I was never faced with the trials that military life brings to one's conscience, and so it was never something I thought about. I took for granted the ease by which I became a CO. Now I know that many people who believe the same as I traveled much rougher roads to get here.

As grateful as I am to appreciate my own road, I am also grateful that I understand, or at least know about, the rougher roads. I did not understand the significance of my family, and the history of CO in our family history, until I came to CCW. This year has changed me as a person and will shape who I am for the rest of my life. Thank you. You may not realize what you have done, or that you did anything, but each of you has played a role in this year and I am very grateful for your contribution.

Rebecca Jolliff, BVS, 2012-2013

I grew up in Oregon, where I graduated from Willamette University in May, 2012 with a B.A. in English and Spanish. At the Center I will take calls for the GI Rights Hotline, counsel individual conscientious objectors, and do other work to promote the rights of COs.

I come from a Quaker family, so issues regarding peace and conscientious objection have been on my radar for most of my life. My interest in conscientious objection has grown over the years as I've thought more deeply about my faith and questioned U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, after reading my first application from a soldier hoping to get discharged as a CO, I'm even more excited to work with CCW. It feels natural to oppose war when you've been raised in a historic peace church, as I have. But coming to that position on your own – in an environment that tells you your beliefs make you un-American, unpatriotic, and even cowardly – takes incredible courage and conviction. I'm filled with respect for the men and women who make this difficult decision, and I look forward to working on their behalf.

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nota bene

2013 marks ten years since the U.S. invasion of Iraq began. Do you remember where you were when you heard? I will never forget. Standing in the rain in Albuquerque, NM, with a thousand others, I was helpless to stop the bombing and killing that had begun a few hours earlier.

Across the world, Tony Garcia felt helpless, too. Already in the military for 23 years before he was sent to be part of the invasion of Iraq, Tony was no stranger to war. He had been ordered to fight in the 1989 invasion of Panama, the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and the war in Afghanistan. Tony never questioned orders, because when you do that, "you get people killed," he told me. But Tony's experiences in Afghanistan troubled him, and he began to question the mission there. That was February, 2003, though, and there was no time for questions: Tony was redeployed to Kuwait to prepare for the invasion of Iraq.

When the Marines headed north out of Kuwait, toward Baghdad, they didn't meet the army of well-trained fighters that Tony remembered from 1991. Most of those men had slipped off their uniforms and quietly disappeared into the evolving chaos of a society under siege. Instead, the Marines met Iraqi civilians, and not all of them were happy to see the foreign troops.

Just a few days into the invasion, Tony's Marines encountered a group of civilians waving the white flag. Seconds later, the flags were replaced with rocket-propelled grenades, and 16 Marines were dead. In the firefight that ensued, Tony fatally wounded a young boy who got caught in the crossfire – an Iraqi child with dark eyes and dark curly hair, so similar to Tony's own son.

For each conscientious objector, the moment at which their beliefs against war crystallize is different and occurs for different reasons. For some, it is the birth of a child that tells them that all life is sacred. For others, the moment comes as early as boot camp, singing cadences like "Napalm Sticks to Children" or "Walking in a Sniper's Wonder-

land." For Tony, it happened that day, when he saw the light fade from the child's eyes: in that moment he knew that war was wrong.

Once home from Iraq, back in New Mexico, Tony was determined to turn his grief into healing. For the next three years, Tony and I, often joined by other veterans, visited dozens of schools across New Mexico, speaking with thousands of students about war. Tony was sure he took one child's life with a gun; I know he saved hundreds of others' with his words.

On Veteran's Day, Tony took his last breath. He was 50 years old. Tony Garcia was a conscientious objector who suffered deeply from the moral injury caused by war. It was my honor to work with him and to share his story with you. It is because of Tony and other COs who endure the crippling pain of war that we do this work.

I hope you will continue to stand with those who turn their backs on war by helping to make sure that the Center on Conscience & War will always be here to assist them.

Thank you.

In Solidarity,

